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RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3311
RUEHAE/AMEMBASSY ASMARA 2085
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0117
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0088
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0593
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 2948
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0839
RUEHYN/AMEMBASSY SANAA 1521
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SUBJECT: UPDATE 3: AVIAN INFLUENZA IN DJIBOUTI

REF: DJIBOUTI 564

DJIBOUTI 578

DJIBOUTI 615

¶1. Summary. The Government of Djibouti (GoD) has reported that results from the previously identified human case of H5N1 may now be incorrect due to errors that appear to have occurred during the testing process. The sample taken from the two-year-old girl in Dammerjog may have actually been mixed up with another sample taken from a different subject. It is unclear if the other subject is human or animal, and it is also unclear where the other subject was located. End summary.

Constant confusion

¶2. In Djibouti 578, we reported that an eight-year-old had tested positive for H5N1. In Djibouti 617, we reported that the infected child was actually two years old, and that two of her siblings and her health-care provider and a family chicken were also sick. After tests on all the sick people and the chickens close to the girl returned negative, the World Health Organization (WHO) and others questioned how a 2-year-old living in an isolated village might have come in contact with H5N1. Additionally, officials were surprised that such a young child recovered without receiving Tamiflu within 48 hours of onset of symptoms.

¶3. On May 24, the Djibouti Ministry of Health said that the sample that tested positive might have been mislabeled. According to the log of samples, the one that tested positive was labeled with a name and: "8 months, 8 kg". But for unclear reasons, the information was communicated to the public (including WHO) as "8-year-old child". However, when they found the child whose name matched the sample, they discovered she was actually two years old.

Questions remain

¶4. The latest information indicates that the Djiboutian health care worker who took blood samples in Dammerjog mislabeled the samples. GoD still believes the infected sample came from the village of Dammerjog, but it is not known which patient might have provided the sample. WHO and U.S. military representatives are attempting to identify all patients from whom samples may have

been drawn to retest. Additionally, the child originally labeled positive has not been ruled out, so she will be tested for the presence of antibodies. Post anticipates it will not receive test results for at least another week.

¶5. Embassy will inform Washington of developments in test results or further information released by the GoD.

RAGSDALE